

Letter from Glenn H. Curtiss to Mabel Hubbard Bell, March 19, 1908

THE AERIAL EXPERIMENT ASSOCIATION ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL, Chairman
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Engineer J. A. D. M c .CURDY, Treasurer Hammondsport, N. Y ., T. SELFRIDGE,
Secretary Mar. 19, 1908. 190 Mrs. Alex. G. Bell, Washington, D. C. Dear Mrs. Bell:-

I have been so busy for the last week that I have left it to the newspapers to report that we are doing. I sent three photographs by the Doctor and I am mailing to-day the balance of a set of the Red Wing.

I believe you know all the details of the first trial. We did not have an opportunity to get on the ice again until yesterday, when after considerable difficulty we succeeded in making a landing on one portion of the ice which had been broken up and was still good.

We left here at 8:30, immediately on arrival of the train which brought Casey back from St. Catherine's, and made our way some eight miles down the Lake on the tug Springstead. We saw some very good samples of flying machines on the way down. The edge of the ice which had been broken up was completely lined with gulls, wild duck and wild goose.

While maneuvering to get a solid place to land it began to snow and then rain. This soaked the cloth covering of the Red Wing and added perhaps, 50 lbs. to its weight. The greater part of the weight being back of the center of gravity which, I believe, had something to do with the accident. The wind began to come up, and fearing that it would be our last chance and the wind would get worse instead of dying out, we headed the machine into the wind and Casey after flopping a coin with Selfridge to see who would ride mounted the seat, and I started up the engine as in a previous trial. I advanced the spark, speeding

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the engine a little more than in the first trial, and when we let go she darted ahead and arise from the ice before going 50 ft., in spite of the added weight of the water.

The wind was blowing about 12 miles an hour and it immediately became evident that we were not proficient enough in designing an handling an aerodome to handle the machine in so much wind. She made about 125 ft. but was rising to a height of about 20 ft., and then being tilted by the wind pressure under the right wing, slid off sideways to the left and come down to an angle of 45 degrees completely demolishing the left half of the machine. Luckily, Casey was not at all hurt by the jar, and while the experience was disastrous to the machine, it has taught us a great deal.

We were pleased to learn of your returning health and hope that on the Doctor's next trip to Hammondsport you will be able to come with him.

With best regards from myself and Mrs. Curtiss, I am,

Yours truly, G.H.Curtiss GHC/S.